



# Ontario Provincial Police Police provinciale de l'Ontario

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## **OPP CRACKING DOWN ON MOTORISTS WHO DON'T MOVE TO THE LEFT WHEN PASSING EMERGENCY VEHICLES PARKED ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD**

**(ORILLIA)** - Ontario Provincial Police officers will be cracking down on motorists who don't slow down or move to the left when passing emergency vehicles parked on the side of the road with their emergency lights flashing.

OPP Commissioner Julian Fantino pointed out that there have been two incidents in the past week in which motorists have collided with OPP vehicles – one on Highway 401 westbound in the Cambridge area and another where an OPP officer from the Nottawasaga Detachment was injured when he was hit by a vehicle during a traffic stop.

In a third case, a motorist drove into the back of a fire truck that was parked on the side of the highway while responding to a collision on Highway 401 in Toronto.

To increase safety, Ontario's Highway Traffic Act requires motorists when approaching a police, fire or ambulance vehicle stopped with its emergency lights flashing in the same direction of travel, either in a lane or on the shoulder of a road or highway, to slow down and pass with caution. If the road has two or more lanes, the motorist must move over into another lane, if it can be done safely. Failing to do so can result in the following:

First offence - \$400 to \$2,000, plus three demerit points upon conviction and possible suspension of driver's licence for up to two years. Subsequent offence (within five years) - \$1,000 to \$4,000 fine, possible jail time up to six months and possible suspension of driver's licence for up to two years.

"The legislation regarding passing emergency vehicles was passed in April 2003," Fantino said, "so it's not something new. Motorists have a responsibility to know and obey the Highway Traffic Act.

"We have had two officers injured in a week and extensive damage done to two cruisers," Fantino said. "That's totally unacceptable and won't be tolerated. Officers put their lives on the line every time they make a traffic stop but they shouldn't have to worry about irresponsible drivers who don't obey the law.

"I have ordered a crackdown on violators. We will be using extra patrol vehicles, including unmarked vehicles, to enforce the law."

In the first incident, an officer was parked on the side of the highway in front of a vehicle that had been involved in a minor collision and had the driver in his OPP cruiser when an 18-year-old female drove into the back of the first car, pushing it into the OPP cruiser. The back car was destroyed and the OPP cruiser received extensive damage.

The OPP officer, the driver of the car involved in the first collision and the female driver were all sent to hospital for treatment.

In the second incident, on January 4, at approximately 12:30 a.m. a Nottawasaga OPP officer was investigating a single motor vehicle rollover which occurred on Highway #89 just west of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Concession of Adjala-Tosorontio Township.

The officer had parked his cruiser on the north side of the road with its rear emergency lights activated.

Numerous emergency vehicles and emergency personnel were actively working at the scene in order to free the driver of the rolled over vehicle. All emergency vehicles had their emergency lighting activated.

While standing beside the driver's side door of the police cruiser, the officer was struck by a passing Dodge Caravan. The officer was treated in hospital for bruising to one side of his body. He was released later that day.

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